



**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

**U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

**[Docket No. ICEB-2022-0008]**

**RIN 1653-ZA28**

**Employment Authorization for Cameroonian F-1 Nonimmigrant Students  
Experiencing Severe Economic Hardship as a Direct Result of the Crises in  
Cameroon**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Department of Homeland Security.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces that the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) is suspending certain regulatory requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant students whose country of citizenship is Cameroon, regardless of country of birth (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon), and who are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon. The Secretary is taking action to provide relief to these Cameroonian nonimmigrant students who are lawful F-1 nonimmigrant students so the students may request employment authorization, work an increased number of hours while school is in session, and reduce their course load while continuing to maintain their F-1 nonimmigrant student status. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives employment authorization by means of this notice to be engaged in a “full course of study” for the duration of the employment authorization, if the nonimmigrant student satisfies the minimum course load requirement described in this notice.

**DATES:** This F-1 visa action is in effect from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER], through December 7, 2023.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sharon Snyder, Unit Chief, Policy and Response Unit, Student and Exchange Visitor Program, MS 5600, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 500 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20536-5600; e-mail: [sevp@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:sevp@ice.dhs.gov), telephone: (703) 603-3400. This is not a toll-free number. Program information can be found at <https://www.ice.gov/sevis/>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**What action is DHS taking under this notice?**

The Secretary is exercising authority under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9) to temporarily suspend the applicability of certain requirements governing on-campus and off-campus employment for F-1 nonimmigrant students whose country of citizenship is Cameroon regardless of country of birth (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon), who are present in the United States in lawful F-1 nonimmigrant student status on the date of publication of this notice, and who are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon. Effective with this publication, suspension of the employment limitations is available through December 7, 2023, for those who are in lawful F-1 nonimmigrant status. DHS will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student granted employment authorization through this notice to be engaged in a “full course of study” for the duration of the employment authorization, if the student satisfies the minimum course load set forth in this notice.<sup>1</sup> *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(F).

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<sup>1</sup> Because the suspension of requirements under this notice applies throughout an academic term during which the suspension is in effect, DHS considers an F-1 nonimmigrant student who engages in a reduced course load or employment (or both) after this notice is effective to be engaging in a “full course of study,” *see* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6), and eligible for employment authorization, through the end of any academic term for which such student is matriculated as of December 7, 2023, provided the student satisfies the minimum course load requirements in this notice. DHS also considers students who engage in online coursework pursuant to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) guidance for nonimmigrant students to be in compliance with regulations while such guidance remains in effect. *See* ICE Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19, Nonimmigrant Students & SEVP-Certified Schools: Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus> (last visited May 10, 2022).

**Who is covered by this notice?**

This notice applies exclusively to F-1 nonimmigrant students who meet all of the following conditions:

- (1) Are a citizen of Cameroon regardless of country of birth (or an individual having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon);
- (2) Were lawfully present in the United States in F-1 nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(F)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(F)(i), on the date of publication of this notice;
- (3) Are enrolled in an academic institution that is Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified for enrollment for F-1 nonimmigrant students;
- (4) Are currently maintaining F-1 nonimmigrant status; and
- (5) Are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon.

This notice applies to F-1 nonimmigrant students in an approved private school in kindergarten through grade 12, public school grades 9 through 12, and undergraduate and graduate education. An F-1 nonimmigrant student covered by this notice who transfers to another SEVP-certified academic institution remains eligible for the relief provided by means of this notice.

**Why is DHS taking this action?**

DHS is taking action to provide relief to Cameroonian F-1 nonimmigrant students experiencing severe economic hardship due to the crises in Cameroon. Based on its review of country conditions in Cameroon and input received from the U.S. Department of State on the emergent circumstances in Cameroon, DHS is taking action to allow eligible F-1 nonimmigrant students from Cameroon (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon) to request employment authorization, work an

increased number of hours while school is in session, and reduce their course load while continuing to maintain F-1 nonimmigrant student status.

The ongoing violence between government forces and armed separatists in the English-speaking regions (Northwest and Southwest), as well as deadly attacks by the terrorist organization Boko Haram (including its breakaway faction, ISIS-West Africa and vigilante self-defense groups in the Far North Region) continue to negatively impact the populations in the affected regions and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of people have been killed in the English-speaking regions, and hundreds of thousands more remain in internally displaced persons camps, while tens of thousands have sought refuge in the neighboring country of Nigeria.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the government has increased restrictions on political opposition groups and civil society and there are reports that the government of Cameroon has committed human rights violations and abuses.<sup>4</sup> The three issues —crisis in the English-speaking regions, instability in the Far North Region, and restrictions on political space and reports of human rights violations and abuse<sup>5</sup>—have led to various

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<sup>2</sup> *Cameroon: Witness testimony and satellite images reveal the scale of devastation in Anglophone regions*, Amnesty International, Jul. 28, 2021, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/07/cameroon-satellite-images-reveal-devastation-in-anglophone-regions/> (last visited May 10, 2022); *Separatism in Cameroon: 5 years of violent civil war*, Deutsche Welle (DW), Oct. 1, 2021, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/separatism-in-cameroon-5-years-of-violent-civil-war/a-59369417> (last visited May 10, 2022); *Cameroon: Nine Killed in Army Attack*, Human Rights Watch, Feb. 4, 2021, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/04/cameroon-nine-killed-army-attack> (last visited May 10, 2022); *Boko Haram Violence against Civilians Spiking in Northern Cameroon*, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Nov. 13, 2020, available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/boko-haram-violence-against-civilians-spiking-in-northern-cameroon/> (last visited May 10, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> *Cameroon Multi-country Operations (MCO) Factsheet*, UNHCR, Jul. 2021, available at: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20MCO%20CAMEROON%20FACTSHEET%20%20JULY%202021.pdf> (last visited May 10, 2022); POCs February 2022, UNHCR data portal, Feb. 2022, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/91170> (last visited May 10, 2022); UNHCR Cameroon MCO Factsheet – January 2022, Mar. 9, 2022, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/unhcr-cameroon-mco-factsheet-january-2022> (last visited May 10, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, U.S. Department of State, 2021, available at: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/cameroon/> (last visited May 10, 2022); *Cameroon: Key Issues and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, Sept. 22, 2021, available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46919/2> (last visited May 10, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> See generally CAMEROON 2021, Amnesty International, 2022, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/cameroon/report-cameroon/> (last visited May 13, 2022); *Cameroon: Boko Haram Attacks Escalate in Far North*, Human Rights Watch, Apr. 5, 2021, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/05/cameroon-boko-haram-attacks-escalate-far-north> (last visited May 13, 2022); Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 - Cameroon [AFR

challenges, including violence against civilians, a humanitarian crisis, and economic decline.<sup>6</sup>

As of April 22, 2022, approximately 1,020 F-1 nonimmigrant students from Cameroon (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon) are in the United States and are enrolled at SEVP-certified academic institutions. Given the extent of the crises in Cameroon, affected students whose primary means of financial support comes from Cameroon may need to be exempt from the normal student employment requirements to continue their studies in the United States. The crises have made it unfeasible for many students to safely return to Cameroon for the foreseeable future. Without employment authorization, these students may lack the means to meet basic living expenses.

**What is the minimum course load requirement to maintain valid F-1 nonimmigrant status under this notice?**

Undergraduate F-1 nonimmigrant students who receive on-campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice must remain registered for a minimum of six semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term. *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(v). Undergraduate F-1 nonimmigrant students enrolled in a term of different duration must register for at least one half of the credit hours normally required under a “full course of study.” *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(B) and (F). A graduate-level F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice must remain registered for a minimum of three semester or quarter hours of instruction per

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01/1352/2020], Amnesty International, 2020, Apr. 8, 2020, available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2028266.html> (last visited May 13, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> *The Socio-Political Crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon: Assessing the Economic and Social Impacts*, World Bank Group, Jan. 2021, available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/795921624338364910/pdf/The-Socio-Political-Crisis-in-the-Northwest-and-Southwest-Regions-of-Cameroon-Assessing-the-Economic-and-Social-Impacts.pdf> (last visited May 10, 2022).

academic term. *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(v). Nothing in this notice affects the applicability of other minimum course load requirements set by the academic institution.

In addition, an F-1 nonimmigrant student (either undergraduate or graduate) granted on-campus or off-campus employment authorization under this notice may count up to the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter of online or distance education toward satisfying this minimum course load requirement, unless their course of study is in an English language study program.<sup>7</sup> *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G). An F-1 nonimmigrant student attending an approved private school in kindergarten through grade 12 or public school in grades 9 through 12 must maintain “class attendance for not less than the minimum number of hours a week prescribed by the school for normal progress toward graduation,” as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(E). Nothing in this notice affects the applicability of federal and state labor laws limiting the employment of minors.

**May an eligible F-1 nonimmigrant student who already has on-campus or off-campus employment authorization benefit from the suspension of regulatory requirements under this notice?**

Yes. An F-1 nonimmigrant student who is a Cameroonian citizen, regardless of country of birth (or an individual having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon), who already has on-campus or off-campus employment authorization and is otherwise eligible may benefit under this notice, which suspends certain regulatory requirements relating to the minimum course load requirement under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i) and certain employment eligibility requirements under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9). Such an eligible F-1 nonimmigrant student may benefit without having to apply for a new

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<sup>7</sup> DHS considers students who are compliant with ICE coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) guidance for nonimmigrant students to be in compliance with regulations while such COVID-19 guidance remains in effect. *See* ICE Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19, <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus> (last visited May 10, 2022).

Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD). To benefit from this notice, the F-1 nonimmigrant student must request that the designated school official (DSO) enter the following statement in the remarks field of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) student record, which the student's Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status, will reflect:

Approved for more than 20 hours per week of [DSO must insert "on-campus" or "off-campus," depending upon the type of employment authorization the student already has] employment authorization and reduced course load under the Special Student Relief authorization from [DSO must insert the beginning date of the notice or the beginning date of the student's employment, whichever date is later] until [DSO must insert either the student's program end date, the current EAD expiration date (if the student is currently authorized for off-campus employment), or the end date of this notice, whichever date comes first].

**Must the F-1 nonimmigrant student apply for reinstatement after expiration of this special employment authorization if the student reduces his or her "full course of study"?**

No. DHS will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives and comports with the employment authorization permitted under this notice to be engaged in a "full course of study"<sup>8</sup> for the duration of the student's employment authorization, provided that a qualifying undergraduate level F-1 nonimmigrant student remains registered for a minimum of six semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term, and a qualifying graduate level F-1 nonimmigrant student remains registered for a minimum of three semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term.<sup>9</sup> See 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(v) and (f)(6)(i)(F). Undergraduate F-1 nonimmigrant students enrolled in a

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<sup>8</sup> See 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6).

term of different duration must register for at least one half of the credit hours normally required under a “full course of study.” *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(B) and (F). DHS will not require such students to apply for reinstatement under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(16) if they are otherwise maintaining F-1 nonimmigrant status.

**Will an F-2 dependent (spouse or minor child) of an F-1 nonimmigrant student covered by this notice be eligible to apply for employment authorization?**

No. An F-2 spouse or minor child of an F-1 nonimmigrant student is not authorized to work in the United States and, therefore, may not accept employment under the F-2 nonimmigrant status, as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(15)(i).

**Will the suspension of the applicability of the standard student employment requirements apply to an individual who receives an initial F-1 visa and makes an initial entry into the United States after the effective date of this notice in the Federal Register?**

No. The suspension of the applicability of the standard regulatory requirements only applies to certain F-1 nonimmigrant students who meet the following conditions:

- (1) Are a citizen of Cameroon regardless of country of birth (or an individual having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon);
- (2) Were lawfully present in the United States in F-1 nonimmigrant status, under section 101(a)(15)(F)(i) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(F)(i) on the date of publication of this notice;
- (3) Are enrolled in an academic institution that is SEVP-certified for enrollment of F-1 nonimmigrant students;
- (4) Are maintaining F-1 nonimmigrant status; and
- (5) Are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon.



An F-1 nonimmigrant student who does not meet all these requirements is ineligible for the suspension of the applicability of the standard regulatory requirements (even if experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon).

**Does this notice apply to a continuing F-1 nonimmigrant student who departs the United States after the effective date of this notice in the Federal Register and who needs to obtain a new F-1 visa before returning to the United States to continue an educational program?**

Yes. This notice applies to such an F-1 nonimmigrant student, but only if the DSO has properly notated the student's SEVIS record, which will then appear on the student's Form I-20. The normal rules for visa issuance remain applicable to a nonimmigrant who needs to apply for a new F-1 visa to continue an educational program in the United States.

**Does this notice apply to elementary school, middle school, and high school students in F-1 status?**

Yes. However, this notice does not by itself reduce the required course load for F-1 nonimmigrant students from Cameroon enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 at a private school, or grades 9 through 12 at a public high school. Such students must maintain the minimum number of hours of class attendance per week prescribed by the academic institution for normal progress toward graduation, as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(E). The suspension of certain regulatory requirements related to employment through this notice is applicable to all eligible F-1 nonimmigrant students regardless of educational level. Eligible F-1 nonimmigrant students from Cameroon enrolled in an elementary school, middle school, or high school may benefit from the suspension of the requirement in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i) that limits on-campus employment

to 20 hours per week while school is in session. Nothing in this notice affects the applicability of federal and state labor laws limiting the employment of minors.

***On-Campus Employment Authorization***

**Will an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus employment authorization under this notice be authorized to work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session?**

Yes. For an F-1 nonimmigrant student covered in this notice, the Secretary is suspending the applicability of the requirement in 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i) that limits an F-1 nonimmigrant student's on-campus employment to 20 hours per week while school is in session. An eligible F-1 nonimmigrant student has authorization to work more than 20 hours per week while school is in session if the DSO has entered a recommendation in SEVIS and entered the following statement in the remarks field of the SEVIS student record, which will be reflected on the student's Form I-20:

Approved for more than 20 hours per week of on-campus employment and reduced course load, under the Special Student Relief authorization from [DSO must insert the beginning date of this notice or the beginning date of the student's employment, whichever date is later] until [DSO must insert the student's program end date or the end date of this notice, whichever date comes first].

To obtain on-campus employment authorization, the F-1 nonimmigrant student must demonstrate to the DSO that the employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship directly resulting from the crises in Cameroon. An F-1 nonimmigrant student authorized by the DSO to engage in on-campus employment by means of this notice does not need to file any applications with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The standard rules permitting full-time employment on-campus when school is not in session or during school vacations apply, as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i).

**Will an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus employment authorization under this notice have authorization to reduce the normal course load and still maintain his or her F-1 nonimmigrant student status?**

Yes. DHS will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives on-campus employment authorization under this notice to be engaged in a “full course of study”<sup>10</sup> for the purpose of maintaining their F-1 nonimmigrant student status for the duration of the on-campus employment, if the student satisfies the minimum course load requirement described in this notice, as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(F). However, the authorization to reduce the normal course load is solely for DHS purposes of determining valid F-1 nonimmigrant student status. Nothing in this notice mandates that school officials allow an F-1 nonimmigrant student to take a reduced course load if the reduction would not meet the academic institution’s minimum course load requirement for continued enrollment.<sup>11</sup>

***Off-Campus Employment Authorization***

**What regulatory requirements does this notice temporarily suspend relating to off-campus employment?**

For an F-1 nonimmigrant student covered by this notice, as provided under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(A), the Secretary is suspending the following regulatory requirements relating to off-campus employment:

(a) The requirement that a student must have been in F-1 nonimmigrant student status for one full academic year to be eligible for off-campus employment;

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<sup>10</sup> See 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6).

<sup>11</sup> The minimum course load requirement for enrollment in a school must be established in a publicly available document (e.g., catalog, website, or operating procedure), and it must be a standard applicable to all students (U.S. citizens and foreign students) enrolled at the school.

(b) The requirement that an F-1 nonimmigrant student must demonstrate that acceptance of employment will not interfere with the student's carrying a full course of study;

(c) The requirement that limits an F-1 nonimmigrant student's employment authorization to no more than 20 hours per week of off-campus employment while the school is in session; and

(d) The requirement that the student demonstrate that employment under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(i) is unavailable or otherwise insufficient to meet the needs that have arisen as a result of the unforeseen circumstances.

**Will an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives off-campus employment authorization under this notice have authorization to reduce the normal course load and still maintain F-1 nonimmigrant status?**

Yes. DHS will deem an F-1 nonimmigrant student who receives off-campus employment authorization by means of this notice to be engaged in a "full course of study"<sup>12</sup> for the purpose of maintaining F-1 nonimmigrant student status for the duration of the student's employment authorization if the student satisfies the minimum course load requirement described in this notice, as required under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(F). However, the authorization for a reduced course load is solely for DHS purposes of determining valid F-1 nonimmigrant student status. Nothing in this notice mandates that school officials allow an F-1 nonimmigrant student to take a reduced course load if such reduced course load would not meet the school's minimum course load requirement.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6).

<sup>13</sup> The minimum course load requirement for enrollment in a school must be established in a publicly available document (e.g., catalog, website, or operating procedure), and it must be a standard applicable to all students (U.S. citizens and foreign students) enrolled at the school.

**How may an eligible F-1 nonimmigrant student obtain employment authorization for off-campus employment with a reduced course load under this notice?**

An F-1 nonimmigrant student must file a Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, with USCIS to apply for off-campus employment authorization based on severe economic hardship directly resulting from the crises in Cameroon. Filing instructions are located at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.

*Fee considerations.* Submission of a Form I-765 currently requires payment of a \$410 fee. An applicant who is unable to pay the fee may submit a completed Form I-912, Request for Fee Waiver, along with the Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. *See* [www.uscis.gov/feewaiver](http://www.uscis.gov/feewaiver). The submission must include an explanation about why USCIS should grant the fee waiver and the reason(s) for the inability to pay, and any evidence to support the reason(s). *See* 8 CFR 103.7(c).

*Supporting documentation.* An F-1 nonimmigrant student seeking off-campus employment authorization due to severe economic hardship must demonstrate the following to the student's DSO:

- (1) This employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship; and
- (2) The hardship is a direct result of the crises in Cameroon.

If the DSO agrees that the F-1 nonimmigrant student is entitled to receive such employment authorization, the DSO must recommend application approval to USCIS by making a recommendation in SEVIS and then entering the following statement in the remarks field of the SEVIS student record, which will then appear on that student's Form I-20:

Recommended for off-campus employment authorization in excess of 20 hours per week and reduced course load under the Special Student Relief authorization from the date of the USCIS authorization noted on Form I-766 until [DSO must

insert the program end date or the end date of this notice, whichever date comes first].

The F-1 nonimmigrant student must then file the properly endorsed Form I-20 and Form I-765 according to the instructions for the Form I-765. The F-1 nonimmigrant student may begin working off-campus only upon receipt of the EAD from USCIS.

*DSO recommendation.* In making a recommendation that an F-1 nonimmigrant student be approved for Special Student Relief, the DSO certifies that:

(a) The F-1 nonimmigrant student is in good academic standing and is carrying a “full course of study”<sup>14</sup> at the time of the request for employment authorization;

(b) The F-1 nonimmigrant student is a citizen of Cameroon, regardless of country of birth (or an individual having no nationality who last habitually resided in Cameroon), and is experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon, as documented on the Form I-20;

(c) The F-1 nonimmigrant student has confirmed that the student will comply with the reduced course load requirements of this notice and register for the duration of the authorized employment for a minimum of six semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term if at the undergraduate level, or for a minimum of three semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term if the student is at the graduate level;<sup>15</sup> and

(d) The off-campus employment is necessary to alleviate severe economic hardship to the individual as a direct result of the crises in Cameroon.

*Processing.* To facilitate prompt adjudication of the student’s application for off-campus employment authorization under 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(C), the F-1 nonimmigrant student should do both of the following:

(a) Ensure that the application package includes all of the following documents:

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<sup>14</sup> See 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6).

<sup>15</sup> 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(v).

(1) A completed Form I-765;

(2) The required fee or properly documented fee waiver request as defined in 8 CFR 103.7(c); and

(3) A signed and dated copy of the student's Form I-20 with the appropriate DSO recommendation, as previously described in this notice; and

(b) Send the application in an envelope which is clearly marked on the front of the envelope, bottom right-hand side, with the phrase "SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF."

Failure to include this notation may result in significant processing delays.

If USCIS approves the student's Form I-765, USCIS will send the student a Form I-766 EAD as evidence of employment authorization. The EAD will contain an expiration date that does not exceed the end of the granted temporary relief.

### ***Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Considerations***

#### **Can an F-1 nonimmigrant student apply for TPS and for benefits under this notice at the same time?**

Yes. An F-1 nonimmigrant student who has not yet applied for TPS or for other relief that reduces the student's course load per term and permits an increased number of work hours per week, such as Special Student Relief,<sup>16</sup> under this notice has two options.

Under the first option, the nonimmigrant student may apply for TPS according to the instructions in the USCIS notice designating Cameroon for TPS (published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register). All TPS applicants must file a Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status with the appropriate fee (or request a fee waiver). Although not required to do so, if F-1 nonimmigrant students want to obtain a new EAD based on their TPS application that is valid through December 7, 2023, and to be eligible for automatic EAD extensions that may be available to EADs with an A-12 or

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<sup>16</sup> See DHS Study in the States, Special Student Relief, <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/students/special-student-relief> (last visited May 10, 2022).

C-19 category code, they must file Form I-765 and pay the Form I-765 fee (or request a fee waiver). After receiving the TPS-related EAD, an F-1 nonimmigrant student may request that their DSO make the required entry in SEVIS, issue an updated Form I-20, as described in this notice, and notate that the nonimmigrant student has been authorized to carry a reduced course load and is working pursuant to a TPS-related EAD. So long as the nonimmigrant student maintains the minimum course load described in this notice, does not otherwise violate their nonimmigrant status, including as provided under 8 CFR 214.1(g), and maintains their TPS, then the student maintains F-1 status and TPS concurrently.

Under the second option, the nonimmigrant student may apply for an EAD under Special Student Relief by filing Form I-765 with the location specified in the filing instructions. At the same time, the F-1 nonimmigrant student may file a separate TPS application but must submit the Form I-821 according to the instructions provided in the Federal Register notice designating Cameroon for TPS. If the F-1 nonimmigrant student has already applied for employment authorization under Special Student Relief, they are not required to submit the Form I-765 as part of the TPS application. However, some nonimmigrant students may wish to obtain a TPS-related EAD in light of certain extensions that may be available to EADs with an A-12 or C-19 category code. The nonimmigrant student should check the appropriate box when filling out Form I-821 to indicate whether a TPS-related EAD is being requested. Again, so long as the nonimmigrant student maintains the minimum course load described in this notice and does not otherwise violate the student's nonimmigrant status, included as provided under 8 CFR 214.1(g), the nonimmigrant will be able to maintain compliance requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant student status while having TPS.



**When a student applies simultaneously for TPS and benefits under this notice, what is the minimum course load requirement while an application for employment authorization is pending?**

The F-1 nonimmigrant student must maintain normal course load requirements for a “full course of study”<sup>17</sup> unless or until the nonimmigrant student receives employment authorization under this notice. TPS-related employment authorization, by itself, does not authorize a nonimmigrant student to drop below twelve credit hours, or otherwise applicable minimum requirements (e.g., clock hours for language students). Once approved for Special Student Relief employment authorization, the F-1 nonimmigrant student may drop below twelve credit hours, or otherwise applicable minimum requirements (with a minimum of six semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term if at the undergraduate level, or for a minimum of three semester or quarter hours of instruction per academic term if at the graduate level). *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(5)(v), (f)(6), and (f)(9)(i) and (ii).

**How does a student who has received a TPS-related EAD then apply for authorization to take a reduced course load under this notice?**

There is no further application process with USCIS if a student has been approved for a TPS-related EAD. The F-1 nonimmigrant student must demonstrate and provide documentation to the DSO of the direct economic hardship resulting from the crises in Cameroon. The DSO will then verify and update the student’s record in SEVIS to enable the F-1 nonimmigrant student with TPS to reduce the course load without any further action or application. No other EAD needs to be issued for the F-1 nonimmigrant student to have employment authorization.

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<sup>17</sup> *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6).

**Can a noncitizen who has been granted TPS apply for reinstatement of F-1 nonimmigrant student status after the noncitizen's F-1 nonimmigrant student status has lapsed?**

Yes. Current regulations permit certain students who fall out of F-1 nonimmigrant student status to apply for reinstatement. *See* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(16). This provision might apply to students who worked on a TPS-related EAD or dropped their course load before publication of this notice, and therefore fell out of student status. These students must satisfy the criteria set forth in the F-1 nonimmigrant student status reinstatement regulations.

**How long will this notice remain in effect?**

This notice grants temporary relief until December 7, 2023,<sup>18</sup> to eligible F-1 nonimmigrant students. DHS will continue to monitor the situation in Cameroon. Should the special provisions authorized by this notice need modification or extension, DHS will announce such changes in the Federal Register.

**Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)**

An F-1 nonimmigrant student seeking off-campus employment authorization due to severe economic hardship resulting from the crises in Cameroon must demonstrate to the DSO that this employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship. A DSO who agrees that a nonimmigrant student should receive such employment authorization must recommend an application approval to USCIS by making a recommendation in SEVIS and entering information in the remarks field of the SEVIS student record. The

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<sup>18</sup> Because the suspension of requirements under this notice applies throughout an academic term during which the suspension is in effect, DHS considers an F-1 nonimmigrant student who engages in a reduced course load or employment (or both) after this notice is effective to be engaging in a “full course of study,” *see* 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6), and eligible for employment authorization, through the end of any academic term for which such student is matriculated as of December 7, 2023, provided the student satisfies the minimum course load requirement in this notice. DHS also considers students who engage in online coursework pursuant to ICE coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) guidance for nonimmigrant students to be in compliance with regulations while such guidance remains in effect. *See* ICE Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19, Nonimmigrant Students & SEVP-Certified Schools: Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus> (last visited May 10, 2022).

authority to collect this information is in the SEVIS collection of information currently approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Number 1653-0038.

This notice also allows an eligible F-1 nonimmigrant student to request employment authorization, work an increased number of hours while the academic institution is in session, and reduce their course load while continuing to maintain F-1 nonimmigrant student status.

To apply for employment authorization, certain F-1 nonimmigrant students must complete and submit a currently approved Form I-765 according to the instructions on the form. OMB has previously approved the collection of information contained on the current Form I-765, consistent with the PRA (OMB Control No. 1615-0040). Although there will be a slight increase in the number of Form I-765 filings because of this notice, the number of filings currently contained in the OMB annual inventory for Form I-765 is sufficient to cover the additional filings. Accordingly, there is no further action required under the PRA.

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**Alejandro Mayorkas,**

*Secretary,*

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